



Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Stewardship Council Meeting  
January 5, 2007  
Community Boating, Boston, MA

Meeting Minutes

*Stewardship Councilors in Attendance:* Chairman Dick Cross, Councilors Michael Dutton, Whitney Hatch, Laura Johnson, Henry Lee, John Natoli, Richard Ward and Dan Wolf.

*Public Attendees:* Michele Biscoe, Somerville Dog Owners Group; Jen Roy, The Esplanade Association; Patrice Todisco, The Esplanade Association; Gregory Cox, MA Forestry Association; Jen Baker, MASSPIRG; Jan Hunkel, Southwest Corridor Park Conservancy; Steve Kaiser, Coalition for Alewife; Kate Bowditch, Charles River Watershed Association; Mike Ryan, Friends of the Fells; Renata von Tscharnier, Charles River Conservancy; Robert E.W. Collins, MA Professional Foresters; Dicken Crame, MA Forestry Association; Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon; Steve Olanoff, Friends of Blue Hills; Andy Finton, The Nature Conservancy; Jay McCaffrey, Sierra Club; Tom Philbin, Conservation and Recreation Campaign; Roger Frymire; Charlie Zechel, Community Boating; and Ann Dortman, Newton Dogs.

*DCR Staff in Attendance:* Acting Commissioner Priscilla Geigis, Acting Chief of Staff Stephanie Cooper, Secretary Ian Bowles (EOEA), Phil Griffiths, Undersecretary (EOEA); Tracy Lawrence, Karst Hoozeboom, Tom LaRosa, Pat Flynn, Margie Lynch, Patrice Kish, Jim DiMaio, Anne Fiesinger, Bob O'Connor (EOEA), Nikki Belmonte, Joe Rotondo and Mike Tognarelli.

**I. Call To Order (1:05 p.m.), Chairman Cross**

- a. Chairman Cross reconfirmed three *Strategic Goals* which are: to have an agency capable of delivering world class conservation and recreation services; to demonstrate progress towards world class parks; and to generate public appreciation and support for the resources we manage.

**II. Remarks from Secretary Ian Bowles**

- a. Secretary Bowles explained that he accepted Steve Burrington's resignation on Jan. 4 and named Priscilla Geigis the Acting Commissioner of DCR. He publicly thanked Steve for his service.
- b. A nation-wide search for a permanent commissioner has begun.

**III. Commissioner's Report, Acting Commissioner Priscilla Geigis**

- a. Commissioner Geigis thanked Commissioner Burrington for his service.
- b. Professional development has been a focus for DCR in past months. The Operations divisions held an all-day retreat to bring together all newly appointed District Managers. Planning and Engineering held a similar retreat to build cohesion within the team and set goals.
- c. DCR and Glatting Jackson conducted a 4-day charrette process to develop a Parkway Vision Plan for the Middlesex Fells parkways. 150 public participants attended.
- d. Preparations for the snow season have been made, including meetings with municipalities and bike-pedestrian groups to review the snow and ice plan.
- e. Rehabilitation plans for Pilgrim Memorial State Park and Frazier State Pier in Plymouth were announced.
- f. Construction contract will be awarded for the Mt. Greylock historic parkway reconstruction soon. DCR also signed a contract with DCAM and Town of Adams as the Provisional Developer of the \$44M Greylock Glen Recreation and Environmental Education Center project.
- g. DCR also hosted four holiday receptions for partners and staff.

**IV. Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules**

- a. **Finance Committee, Whitney Hatch**

- i. The Finance Committee did not meet due to the holiday season.
    - ii. Councilor Hatch met with Steve Burrington and others to discuss the gap analysis project. With current staff changes, he will work with TPL to figure out a plan of action with DCR.
  - b. **Policy Committee, *Julian Agyeman***
    - i. The Policy Committee did not meet due to the holiday season.
    - ii. The Committee will meet next week to discuss the OHV policy.
  - c. **Resource Management Plan Committee, *Henry Lee***
    - i. The RMP Committee did not meet due to the holiday season.
    - ii. Former Secretary Golledge approved 2 RMP positions.
- V. **Adoption of Central Berkshire District Forest Management Resource Plan, *Jim DiMaio***
- a. Mr. DiMaio briefly went through a slide presentation, emphasizing the importance of the plan to the Berkshires, DCR and the Commonwealth.
  - b. Mr. Greg Cox of the MA Forestry Association and Robert Collins of the MA Association of Professional Foresters stated their support for such plans.
  - c. Councilor Natoli inquired as to how DCR will stay in compliance with plan. Mr. DiMaio explained that there are three levels of monitoring.
  - d. Councilor Wolf inquired about budget issues. Mr. DiMaio stated that budgeting for implementation remains to be seen.
  - e. Councilor Lee reported that language addressing climate change was added on three levels and he recommends that the plan be approved by the Council. *All in favor*
- VI. **Division of Planning and Engineering Organization, *Karst Hoogeboom***
- a. Mr. Hoogeboom presented a slideshow depicting the organization and functions of the Division of Planning and Engineering and outlining the capital responsibilities. The presentation will be provided in hardcopy for the Council.
  - b. Chairman Cross stated his concern for the capital backlog, and asked for Karst to return to the Council this year to address the risk of catastrophic failure.
  - c. Councilor Dutton would like to know how operational dollars could offset the capital costs (i.e. maintaining the infrastructure). Mr. Hoogeboom stated that consultants are now being required to complete a maintenance manual for all projects.
- VII. **Adoption of Stewardship Council Oversight Strategy**
- a. Final text of the Oversight Strategy was recommended for approval. *All in favor*
- VIII. **Approval of Minutes from 11/30/06 Meeting – *All in favor***
- It was noted to add in Councilor Lee's language verbatim under the recommendation to approve the Chestnut Hill RMP.
- IX. **Other Issues**
- a. It was noted that in the 2007 calendar of meetings, the October meeting should be Friday, October 5 instead of Thursday, October 5.
  - b. Chairman Cross would like to arrange a conference call with the Council to assess the direction and vision for the Council after three years of inception. Proposed changes to the legislation were handed out to Council members to be further discussed on the call.

**X. Public Comment**

- a. Heidi Ricci of Mass Audubon asked the Council if there is currently representation from western Massachusetts. Chairman Cross said there is a vacancy in that slot.
- b. Renata von Tscharnier of the Charles River Conservancy thanked the Council for their oversight role.
- c. Jan Hunkel of the Southwest Corridor Park Conservancy asked about the status of a horticulturalist or volunteer coordinator. Much of the maintenance on the property is performed by volunteers (photos displayed), and funds/staff are need to work on granite paving, caulking, fixing the irrigation system and other maintenance tasks. Chairman Cross suggested that Ms. Hunkel work with DCR staff on this issue.
- d. Steve Kaiser of the Coalition for Alewife praised DCR for an open and productive process for the Storrow Drive Tunnel Reconstruction. He inquired if it is legal for a private developer to provide funds to DCR to pay for a consultant. Chairman Cross would like the Commissioner to report back.
- e. Kate Bowditch of the Charles River Watershed Association thanked the Council for the letter to the Patrick transition team and their work on budgeting issues, which has instilled public confidence in the process.
- f. Steve Olanoff of the Friends of Blue Hills attended the Parks Caucus at the State House and reported that someone inquired about a statewide oversight body for DCR. Councilor Lee suggested visiting with the Chairs of the legislative committees. Chairman Cross volunteered to make the calls.
- g. Andy Finton of the Nature Conservancy applauded the efforts of DCR in forest management planning and helping MA become the first state in the country to receive green certification.
- h. Ann Dortman of Newton Dogs cited that the statewide recreation plan published in 2000 did not recognize dog owners as major users of parks. Currently (2) sets of dog regulations exist from the former agencies. Ms. Dortman encourages DCR to recognize dog walkers in the formation of the DCR regulation and policies. Ms. Dortman submitted a letter and packet to the Council.
- i. Jay McCaffrey of the Sierra Club commended the Council for their efforts and asked that the public be involved in processes at the earliest stages.
- j. Tom Philbin from the Conservation and Recreation Campaign commended the Council for their continual support and efforts.

*Meeting adjourned 3:30 pm*